



TITLE:

# <Notes>Historical and Problem Analysis of Southeast Asian Mass Communication Research

AUTHOR(S):

Lent, John A.

---

CITATION:

Lent, John A.. <Notes>Historical and Problem Analysis of Southeast Asian Mass Communication Research. 東南アジア研究 1979, 17(1): 131-156

ISSUE DATE:

1979-06

URL:

<http://hdl.handle.net/2433/55944>

RIGHT:

## **Historical and Problem Analysis of Southeast Asian Mass Communication Research**

John A. LENT\*

In 1963, while discussing my career reorientation with an advisor at Syracuse University, I told him that because whole regions of the world—Asia, Africa and Latin America—were virgin territory for mass communication researchers, my goal was to explore, and to write, the first comprehensive books on mass media systems in these regions. I suppose, in my naivete, I imagined being the John Gunther of Third World mass communication surveys, doing books on “inside mass media in Asia,” “inside mass media in Latin America,” etc. That was just 14 years ago. In 1963–64, as I prepared to go to the Philippines to conduct research on mass media, I wrote presidents of various Filipino universities inquiring if they were interested in my establishing a journalism or communication program, knowing beforehand that there were very few such programs in the whole Third World, much less in the Philippines.<sup>1)</sup>

---

\* Department of Journalism, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pa. 19122, U.S.A.

1) For example, just seven years earlier in 1956, UNESCO could not find a single African nation where mass communication study had been undertaken; in fact, in all of the Third World, only Brazil, India, Cuba, El Salvador, Honduras, Indonesia, Philippines and Mexico had mass communication study centers. Frank Ugboajah, “Communications Research in Africa,” *Intermedia*, December 1975, p. 10.

That was just 14 years ago.

During these 14 years—to be more exact, the past decade, there has been a significant quantitative growth in the amount of mass communication research generated and the number of journalism/communications programs developed in the Third World. This emphasis on mass communication as a field of study has been aided by supra-national agencies (especially UNESCO), regional media-oriented organizations (e.g., Press Foundation of Asia, AMIC, CIESPAL or Caribbean Institute of Mass Communication) and national governments, all of which have established training, teaching and research centers,<sup>2)</sup> or sponsored and conducted research projects, or provided the outlets for dissemination of research findings through seminars, conferences and new books and periodicals.

---

2) For information on journalism education in Africa, see, James Scotton, “Mass Communication Training in Africa: Some Questions,” Unpublished paper, Temple University, 1976; in Latin America, see, Raymond Nixon, *Education for Journalism in Latin America*, New York: Council on Higher Education in the American Republics, 1970, 40 p.; in Asia, see, Jack Lyle, ed., “Communication/Journalism Education in Asia: Background and Status in Seven Asian Areas,” Honolulu: East West Communication Institute, 1971.

### Adopting/Adapting the Western Communication Model

As more was learned, through reaserch, about Third World mass communication, the problems inherent in the research methodologies and techniques themselves became increasingly evident. And, although the socio-economic and cultural systems on which these research methods were used differed greatly, the problems were frustratingly similar. A review of some of the literature highlights as one of the key problems, that of the use of Western-originated research methods and techniques on societies neither accustomed or conducive to them. The result, as I have written elsewhere, has been that:

Mass media developers in the Third World...(have) latched onto Western communications research skills as if there was something sacred about them. In the process, oftentimes artificial myths are generated in the minds of Third World researchers who feel they must strive for Western ideals. Western communication theories, methods and indices are repeated religiously, thus creating too many unworthy research gods.<sup>3)</sup>

Naturally, reasons can be provided for this concentration on Western communication research theories and methods. The discipline originated in the West—in the United States and Europe—whereto most Third World mass communication researchers flocked to be trained, and from whence Western researchers departed

occasionally to test their toolboxes of communication research instruments on developing world “natives.”<sup>4)</sup>

#### Africa:

Handicaps caused by using alien techniques in a developing nation of Africa were powerfully illustrated by Pausewang who conducted research in Ethiopia. He uncategorically stated that survey research used in a nation such as Ethiopia will always be less reliable, more expensive, more difficult, less valid, less relevant and bound to produce more dangerous side effects than if carried out in an industrialized nation.<sup>5)</sup> Pausewang's African experiences convinced him that because of cultural traits, it was impossible to make his subjects understand anonymity, to conduct interviews in private, or to obtain accurate information (e.g., it is considered impolite to criticize a project in the presence of someone who might be responsible for it).<sup>6)</sup> He said the Ethiopians seemed bewildered by the foreign researcher, wondering why someone would come from so far to ask them questions.<sup>7)</sup> Also, according to Pausewang, the survey method is impractical because of an Ethiopian belief that it is bad luck to be counted.<sup>8)</sup>

Specifically discussing mass communication research in Africa, Ugboajah con-

3) John A. Lent, “Imperialism Via Q-Sorts,” *The Democratic Journalist*, No. 9, 1974, pp. 14-17.

4) *Ibid.*, p. 15.

5) Siegfried Pausewang, *Methods and Concepts of Social Research in a Rural Developing Society*, Munich: Weltforum Verlag, 1973, p. 113.

6) *Ibid.*, pp. 60 and 68.

7) *Ibid.*, p. 37.

cluded in 1975 that what has been done is scanty and scattered, mostly of a historical nature and the main works are conducted by foreigners.<sup>9)</sup> Another African, Esayas, said communication research in Africa suffered from problems of cultural and language differences, organizational redtape and lack of finances, training and research technology. He illustrated by showing that the cultures are not suitable for conducting random or probability sampling, that languages have meaningful inflections that prevent even other Africans from getting accurate responses,<sup>10)</sup> that the governments encumber researchers with unnecessary secretiveness and bureaucratic restrictions, and that computer technology is limited, expensive and difficult to maintain.<sup>11)</sup>

### Latin America:

Beltran has concluded similarly about mass communication research in Latin

America, claiming that the researchers have uncritically followed conceptual and methodological orientations established in the United States and Europe, without creating appropriate methodologies for the region.<sup>12)</sup> Concerning this point, Beltran raised a number of important questions:

Is this passive and imitative attitude of communication researchers in less developed countries due to laziness and/or lack of competence? Does the training received by communications researchers in less developed countries from American universities prevent them from perceiving their own reality? Or is this simply due to the relative newness of communication research in these countries? Is this lack of perceptiveness, creative imagination and audacity a trait of conformist and uncritical mentality that is submissive by definition to cultural colonialism?<sup>13)</sup>

Among other problems of the Latin American communication researcher, Beltran mentions lack of funds and trained personnel and inadequate emphasis on research in the schools of communication. The communication research itself, he said, lacks a conceptual framework of its own, suffers from even a minimal degree of systematization that would facilitate the use of results in more than one country, and is conducted without much consideration of political, socio-economic and cultural variables. Describing the types of research in vogue, Beltran said there is

8) Pausewang made a few suggestions which might be useful here: 1. "It is better the researcher allows the society he investigates to force on him another methodological procedure than he had intended to use, instead of forcing his method upon the society." 2. Because objective science relies on a methodology "concerned with *how exact* something can be counted, rather than with *what* is counted," cruder, less expensive research methods should be sufficient in a less developed nation such as Ethiopia. *Ibid.*, pp. 128, 173.

9) Ugboajah, *op. cit.*

10) For example, the Ibos have four inflections for the word "akwa," which can mean bed, egg, cry or cloth.

11) A study Esayas carried out in Tanzania was delayed three months because of computer breakdown. A repair man had to be flown in from Paris. Menkir Esayas, "Some Problems in Communications Research in Africa," in *Communication Research in the Third World: The Need for Training*, Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, 1976, pp. 30-32.

12) Luis Beltran, "Research Ideologies in Conflict," *Journal of Communication*, Spring 1975.

13) Beltran, quoted in Benjamin Lozare, untitled Ph. D. dissertation proposal, University of Wisconsin, 1977.

an exaggerated emphasis on descriptive and quantitative studies.<sup>14)</sup> Of the 3,000 to 4,000 research studies collected at CIESPAL in Quito, Beltran found that historical studies of journalism (especially of daily newspapers) and communication legislation reports (chiefly dealing with print media and freedom of press) received the most attention of the scholars. Receiving "rather less" attention were print and electronic media structure and function studies,<sup>15)</sup> content analysis of picture story fiction magazines, comic books and soap operas, and studies on contents and effects of television programming. Beltran said very little serious inquiry was given by Latin American communication researchers to studies on news flow and extra-regional influences on mass communication systems, experiences with special formats of education through radio, experiences with instructional television and audio-visual education, and diffusion of agricultural innovations and other aspects of rural communication.<sup>16)</sup>

### South and East Asia:

As interest in mass communication re-

search proliferated in Asia during the 1960s, Asian communication researchers also became aware of the difficulties of adopting Western-oriented methods and techniques.<sup>17)</sup> Gunaratne, who has conducted survey research studies in Sri Lanka, has written about the numerous problems he encountered. He felt it was almost impossible to arrange a private interview with a respondent, listening-in being a trait built into the lifestyle of the Ceylonese peasantry. The result, he said, is that on a sensitive topic such as family planning, a bachelor in the presence of his brother's large family said he was against family planning, but once outside ear range of the family, admitted he was for it but did not want to embarrass his brother. Gunaratne also faced language problems, the differences between written and spoken Sinhalese making his research task difficult. The Western-based contention that respondents should be asked the same questions uniformly-worded did not work in Sri Lanka, he concluded, giving the example of a woman who was asked if she believed that "man" had landed on the moon. Her reply: "But how can that be? My man died several years ago. He couldn't have gone to the moon." Among other handicaps of conducting social research in rural Sri Lanka Gunaratne found were: trying to locate respondents because they were in the

14) Beltran said that in the 1950s, research in Latin American communication was restricted to historical accounts, legal compilations and elementary descriptions based far more on intuition than on measurement. He thought scientific inquiry into communication really came into existence in the 1960s.

15) Dealing with message form, media availability, message consumption, nature of message content, people's access to messages, content effects, code nature and consequences, readership, readability and reading habits, and media ownership/financing.

16) Luis Beltran, "Communications Research in Latin America," *Intermedia*, December 1975, p. 8.

17) The interest was reflected in the numbers of academic theses produced on mass media. For example, the number in the Philippines was in the hundreds; at Punjab University in Pakistan, between 1961-1970, 286 theses dealt with mass communication; at National Cheng-chi University in Taiwan, between 1954-1971, there were 122 such theses.

fields working all day, or because several bore the same name, and the great suspicion the people had of strangers.<sup>18)</sup>

On Taiwan, where survey research has become popular recently, problems emanate from the translation of test items from Western languages to Chinese, the use of an ideographic writing system with various nuances and classical allusions, severe political restrictions on the types of survey questions permitted to be posed and the thrust of Chinese tradition toward humane letters and arts, not empirical statistical studies of society.<sup>19)</sup> The types of communication research heavily emphasized on Taiwan, according to Bryant Kears, are content analyses of particular media and audience studies.<sup>20)</sup>

Both on Taiwan and in Korea, mass communication scholars depend heavily upon models of research generated in the West, especially the United States. On

Taiwan, there is a great deal of replication of studies carried out in the West in "an effort to test these theories and results in a different environment."<sup>21)</sup> In Korea, where most pre-World War II pioneers in mass communication research were influenced by Germany's "zeitungswissenschaft," the emphasis has switched to use of United States theory and technique, mainly because the researchers have been trained in that country, and because American mass communication books have been translated into Korean.<sup>22)</sup> In India, the research has focused on historical studies, and more recently, on clarification of the adoption process in diffusion of information studies.<sup>23)</sup>

Thus, one can readily see that Western research types have been imitated in all parts of the Third World. Family planning and population researchers have promoted many of these methods and techniques.

- 18) Shelton Gunaratne, "Some Research Problems in Rural Sri Lanka," *Media Asia*, 2 : 3 (1975). Problems of conducting survey research in peasant communities have been explored by: O. E. R. Abhayaratne and C. H. S. Jayewardene, *Fertility Trends in Ceylon*, Colombo: Colombo Apothecaries Co., 1967; Godwin Chu, "Problems of Cross-Cultural Communication Research," *Journalism Quarterly*, 41 (1964): 557-562; Gloria Feliciano and Benjamin Lozare, "Doing Research in Rural Asia: Problem of Methods," *Media Asia*, 1(1974): 15-20; Max Ralis, *et al.*, "Applicability of Survey Techniques in Northern India," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 27(1958): 245-250; Lloyd Rudolph and Susanne Rudolph, "Surveys in India: Field Experiences in Madras State," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 27 (1958): 235-244; Elmo Wilson, "Problems of Survey Research in Modernizing Areas," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 27 (1958): 230-234.
- 19) Sheldon Appleton, "Survey Research on Taiwan," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Winter 1976-1977, p. 469.

- 20) "Asian Research Trends Are Uneven," *Media Asia*, 1 (1974): 3. A Taiwanese researcher, Shou-jung Yang, who content analyzed 70 published and unpublished Taiwanese theses and papers, categorized the types of research as pure and unpure. Pure research of mass communication dealt with the mass media themselves while unpure research emphasized social values and effects of mass media. Yang said 41.7 per cent of his sample was made up of pure; 58.6, unpure, most of the latter having been conducted in 1974. Shou-jung Yang, "New Trends in Communication Research in Taiwan," *Media Asia*, 2 : 3 (1975).

- 21) In Lyle, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

- 22) *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.

- 23) "Asian Research Trends Are Uneven," *op. cit.* For a comprehensive treatment of communication education in India and five other South Asian nations, see, John V. Vilanilam, "The Need for Communication Education for Development in Third World Countries. A Study Based on a Survey of South Asian Universities," presented at IAMCR meeting, Leicester, England, September 2, 1976.

## Southeast Asian Communication Research

### Development of Field of Study:

Mass communication had a slow start in Southeast Asia, as it generally had in the Third World. Because the field evolved, in most instances, from journalism departments (which themselves had late starts), this is understandable.<sup>24)</sup> Until after the mid-1960s, most journalism departments, with their limited resources, were too involved in teaching to spend much time with research. This is still a complaint among Southeast Asian professors.

Thus, until the past 10–15 years, virtually all aspects of mass communication in some Southeast Asian nations had gone unstudied. Before 1950, a few investigations were made of literacy levels, inventories of media carried out as parts of national censuses, evaluations of information materials used by agricultural extension workers and educational materials used in classrooms. In other cases, there was library research on histories of media and journalist profiles, and some consumer studies were written by market analysts. In the Philippines, Malaysia/Singapore and Indonesia, a few historical and descriptive books and indepth articles on newspapers appeared (often written by Spanish, American, British or Dutch scholars), as did some masters theses.

Philippine historical works on the newspapers go back to at least 1895,<sup>25)</sup> followed

by others in 1927<sup>26)</sup> and 1933.<sup>27)</sup> Academic theses written in the 1940s and 1950s<sup>28)</sup> also emphasized historical and critical approaches to the media, along with legal implications of the press. Newspapers, and in a few instances, radio, were the mass media analyzed.<sup>29)</sup> Although there were media-oriented periodicals in the Philippines in the immediate

24) The Philippines is an exception having had formal journalism education about 1920. However, Thailand (1939), Vietnam (1967), Malaysia (1971), Singapore (1960) and Indonesia (1950s) were latecomers in instituting journalism programs.

25) W. E. Retana, *El Periodismo Filipino*, Madrid: Imprenta de la viude de M. Minuesa de los Rios, 1895, 648 p.

26) Carson Taylor, *History of the Philippine Press*, Manila: Daily Bulletin Publishing Co., 1927, 61p.

27) Jesus Z. Valenzuela, *History of Journalism in the Philippines*, Manila: published by author, 1933, 217p.

28) Mainly at University Santo Tomas, University of Manila, and to a lesser extent, at National Teachers College, University of the Philippines, Manuel Quezon Educational Institute, Far Eastern University, Centro Escolar University and Ateneo de Manila University.

29) In the 1940s, the theses covered post-war journalism in Manila, history of Philippine journalism, privileged communication on libel, legal control of the press, Philippine patent, copyright and trade mark laws, trends of public opinion as revealed by Philippine newspapers, role of public relations in the soft drink business, radio as a medium for the dissemination of literature, radio broadcasting and freedom of speech, news writing essentials in English, criticism of post-war editorials and columns in Philippine press. In the 1950s, typical thesis topics included public relations in educational administration, freedom of radio stations to broadcast, daily column writing in English by Filipinos, Filipino news stories in English, newspaper publicity in Philippine schools, school publications, proposed public school courses of study in journalism, history of national Catholic newspapers, historical treatments of Lopez-Jaena, Rafael Palma and the propaganda movement of 1872–1896. Analysis of John A. Lent, *Asian Mass Communications: A Comprehensive Bibliography*, Philadelphia: School of Communications and Theater, Temple University, 1975.

post-World War II period, such as *The Newspaperman* and *Deadline*, they carried how-to-do-it and reminiscent-type articles, not systematic research findings. However, not to demean these publications, some useful historical treatments by at least Armando Malay on the Philippine press and Teofilo Agcaoili on Philippine film were carried in their pages, as well as in those of Sunday supplements of daily newspapers.

To a lesser degree, the same statements can be made about mass communication research before the 1960s in Malaysia/Singapore and Indonesia. In Malaysia/Singapore, periodicals such as the *Journal of the Malay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (earlier Straits Branch) included a few articles on mass media—going back to one on the vernacular press of the Straits Settlements published in 1879<sup>30)</sup>—and there were some books and theses on the press, most of which used the historical perspective. Among these were treatments of the press in the Malay language written by Zainal Abidin bin Ahmad, Mohd. bin Dato Muda, Nik Ahmad and William Roff, in the Tamil language by Rama Subbiah, in the Chinese language by Chen Mong Hock, Chen Yun-lo and others, and in the English language by P. L. Burns and Cecil Byrd, among others.<sup>31)</sup> In Indonesia, books and articles, usually written by the Dutch during this period, appeared discussing historical and legalistic themes.<sup>32)</sup> Most

of the other Southeast Asian countries did not benefit from even these inauspicious beginnings.<sup>33)</sup>

In the past 15 years, Asia generally, and individual nations, were treated in descriptive surveys carried out by both Asian and non-Asian scholars. Media of the entire continent were discussed in works by Schramm, Lerner and Schramm, Lent<sup>34)</sup> and others, some taking historical-descriptive approaches, others emphasizing national development and media concepts.

To gauge the types of studies completed, the nations of Southeast Asia are treated individually here. (It must be emphasized

30) E. W. Birch, "The Vernacular Press in the Straits," *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, December 1879, pp. 51-55.

31) Zainal Abidin bin Ahmad, "Malay Journalism in Malaya," *Journal of the Malay of the Royal Asiatic Society*, October 1941, pp. 244-250; Mohd. bin Dato Muda, *Tawarikh Surat Khabar*, Penang: Almutabatul Ziniyah, 1940; Nik Ahmad bin Haji Nik Hassan, "The Malay Press," *Journal of Malay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, May 1963, pp. 37-78; William Roff, "Sejarah Surat Khabar Melayu," Penang: 1967; Rama Subbiah, *History of Tamil Journalism in Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: National Union of Plantation Workers, n.d.; Chen Mong Hock, *The Early Chinese Newspapers of Singapore 1881-1912*, Singapore: University of Malaya Press, 1967; Chen Yun-lo, "Tang ti hua wen pao yeh chih chin hsi," *Nanyang Siang Pau*, January 1, 1956; P. L. Burns, "The English Language Newspapers, 1915-1951," thesis, University of Singapore, 1957; Cecil Byrd, *Early Printing in the Straits Settlements, 1806-1858*, Singapore: National Library, 1970.

32) For list of these, see, Lent, *Asian Mass Communications...*, *op. cit.*

33) See, Lent, *Asian Mass Communications...*, *op. cit.*

34) Wilbur Schramm, *Mass Media and National Development: The Role of Information in the Developing Countries*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964; Daniel Lerner and Wilbur Schramm, *Communication and Change in the Developing Countries*, Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1967; John A. Lent, *The Asian Newspapers' Reluctant Revolution*, Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1971.



that this is not a complete list of works written; it is meant only to indicate directions).

**Burma**—Nothing much appears to have been written by Burmese scholars. Americans such as Blackburn and Fagen<sup>35)</sup> analyzed media in dissertations; USIS conducted listening studies.

**Indonesia**—A few books and many articles in the Indonesian journalism magazine, *Publisistik*, treated topics such as journalism, publisistik, historical and legal implications of media. Also, there have been union lists and bibliographies on newspapers compiled, including Nunn's;<sup>36)</sup> a book on government and press relationships by Oey,<sup>37)</sup> and works by Americans, such as Crawford and Smith,<sup>38)</sup> on media characteristics, and by Germans, such as Eschenbach,<sup>39)</sup> on rural and farm broadcasting.

35) Paul Blackburn, "Communications and National Development in Burma, Malaysia, and Thailand: A Comparative Systematic Analysis," Ph. D. dissertation, American University, 1971; Richard Fagen, "Politics and Communication in the New States: Burma and Ghana," Ph. D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1962.

36) G. Raymond Nunn, *Indonesian Newspapers, An International Union List*, Taipei: Chinese Materials and Research Aids Service Center, 1971.

37) Oey Hong Lee, *Indonesian Government and Press during Guided Democracy*, Hull, England: Centre for South East Asian Studies, 1971.

38) Robert Crawford, "The Daily Indonesian-Language Press of Djakarta: Analysis of Two Recent Critical Periods," Ph. D. dissertation, Syracuse University, 1967; Edward D. Smith, "History of Newspaper Suppression in Indonesia, 1949-1965," Ph. D. dissertation, University of Iowa, 1969.

39) Among them, Josef Eschenbach, "Rural Broadcasting and Listening Groups in the District of Gianjar/Province of Bali," Jakarta: Directorate General of Agriculture, 1972.

**Khmer and Laos**—Very little has been written about mass media, and virtually nothing has been produced by scholars or institutions of those countries. Americans such as Nunn and Lent<sup>40)</sup> have looked at newspaper characteristics.

**Philippines**—Much has been written on all aspects of communication, including directories, indexes, bibliographies to theses on communication, community newspapers, media statistics, etc. Surveys of all media have been written by Feliciano and Icban and Lent,<sup>41)</sup> as well as newspapermen biographies, individual newspaper histories, studies on communication problems in barrios by DeYoung and Collier,<sup>42)</sup> reports of research problems by Feliciano and Lozare<sup>43)</sup> and of communication strategies associated with development problems, and theses too numerous to mention here.

**Malaysia**—The South East Asia Press Centre in the early 1970s conducted surveys of print and broadcast media;<sup>44)</sup> other

40) G. Raymond Nunn and Do Van Anh, *Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian Newspapers: An International Union List*, Taipei: Chinese Materials and Research Aids Service Center, 1972; John A. Lent, "The Press in Laos," *Index on Censorship*, Autumn 1974, pp. 31-34, and "Mass Media in Laos," *Gazette*, 20: 3, pp. 170-179.

41) Gloria D. Feliciano and Crispulo J. Icban, eds., *Philippine Mass Media in Perspective*, Quezon City: Capital Publishing Co., 1967; John A. Lent, *Philippine Mass Communications: Before 1811, After 1966*, Manila: Philippine Press Institute, 1971.

42) John de Young, "A Study of Communications Problems on the Barrio Level," Quezon City: Social Science Research Center, University of the Philippines, 1955; Richard Collier, "Social Effects of Donated Radios on Barrio Life," Quezon City: Community Development Research Council, University of the Philippines, 1961.

43) Feliciano and Lozare, *op. cit.*

historical-descriptive studies have been written by Hitchcock, Lent, Adhikarya,<sup>45)</sup> and others. Indices on mass media have been compiled by Survey Research Malaysia and a few theses, produced both in Malaysia and abroad,<sup>46)</sup> have dealt with mass media. Universiti Sains Malaysia students also carried out a great deal of research, usually historical and descriptive, including content analyses, between 1972-74.<sup>47)</sup>

**Singapore**—Not very much has been written on mass media, although at least one infrastructure study<sup>48)</sup> exists, as do some theses already mentioned and Survey Research Singapore media indices.

**Thailand**—Infrastructure studies were written in the 1960s and 1970s;<sup>49)</sup> theses by both Thai and American students<sup>50)</sup> and Deemar media indices make up the rest of the work completed.

**Vietnam**—Very few reports or publications have appeared on Vietnamese communications and what has been written is usually

by American military or academic personnel. USIS and Voice of America conducted a number of listenership and readership studies during the Vietnam War; a few

44) Howard Coats and Frances Dyer, "The Print and Broadcasting Media in Malaysia," Kuala Lumpur: SEAPC, 1972; Jack Glattbach, "The Print and Broadcasting Media in Malaysia," Kuala Lumpur: SEAPC, 1971; Frances Dyer, "The Print and Broadcasting Media in Malaysia," *Leader*, 3 : 1 (1974), pp. 3-22.

45) David Hitchcock, "The Provincial Press and National Development in Malaysia and the Philippines," Singapore: AMIC, 1973; articles by Lent in *Journalism Quarterly*, *Television Quarterly*, *CILECT*, *Index on Censorship*, *Gazette*, *Asian Profile*, etc.; Ronny Adhikarya, *Broadcasting in Peninsular Malaysia*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977.

46) For example, David Chong-sin Fong, "A Comparative Study of Public Information Services in Multi-Racial Society of Malaysia Before and After Independence," MA thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1968: a few others produced at University of Singapore on historical aspects of mass media.

47) My own students during two academic years at Universiti Sains Malaysia produced content analyses of government press releases used by five Malaysian dailies, of *Utusan Melayu* and *Utusan Malaysia*, of two Chinese dailies, of *Penang Star*, of the Punjabi press in Malaysia, of two student newspapers, of *Utusan Melayu* and *Straits Times* editorials, of *Utusan Malaysia* and *Straits Echo*, of letters to the editor of four Malaysian dailies, of political socialization process in Malaysia through the *Straits Times*, of *Star* and *Straits Echo* editorials, of women's magazines, of headlines in Malaysian dailies, of sports content in four dailies, of short stories in a Malay Sunday newspaper, of three Tamil newspapers and of crime news in dailies. They also conducted case studies, using survey methods, of the Press Foundation of Asia and South East Asian Press Centre, of racial and conflict reporting, of films and the censor, of folk songs and folk tradition as agents of change employed by Ministry of Information, of *The Star* and *Sing Pin Jih Pao*, of the availability, penetration and utilization of mass media in a Tamil village, of the future of Chinese culture/language/press, of influences of television on children, of government usage of television, of boria as a folk medium, of the Voice of Malaysia and of Malaysian ETV. Among the historical studies were treatments of the government information service, Malay newspapers, the underground press in Malaya during the Japanese occupation, *Kwong Wah Yit Poh*, *Straits Echo*, mass media during the Japanese occupation, broadcasting, *Sing Pin Jih Pao* and Penang journalism, 1911-1945. See, Lent, *Asian Mass Communications...*, *op. cit.*, for full citations to these reports.

48) Wong Soon Chong, "General Survey of the Business of Mass Communication in Singapore," Singapore: Institute of Asian Studies, Nanyang University, 1972.

49) Bancha Minetrakinetra, Kasem Sirisumpanth and John D. Mitchell, "Mass Communication Resources in Thailand," Bangkok: Thammasat University, 1965; Somkuan Kaviya, *Directory of Mass Communication Resources in Thailand*, Bangkok: School of Journalism, Thammasat University, 1971.

50) See, Lent, *Asian Mass Communications...*, *op. cit.*

theses by Americans, such as Hull,<sup>51)</sup> and some historical treatments<sup>52)</sup> round out the Vietnamese effort.

Emphasis on mass communication research in the region owes an inestimable debt to the University of the Philippines Institute of Mass Communication (UPIMC), established by Republic Act No. 4379 on June 19, 1965. With assistance from UNESCO, UPIMC developed as the keystone of mass communication research in Southeast Asia, emphasizing a three-pronged program to build up basic data on communication for use in teaching, public service and research, to conduct short-term projects geared to the needs of practitioners and government policy makers and to collaborate with other agencies in carrying out long-term projects tied in with national development. Research was begun at UPIMC on the history and development of various media, availability and use of mass media in government information and other offices, and on the communication process, including cross-disciplinary studies on communicators, messages, audiences, media and media effects. The research emphasis at the institute is reflected by the presence of a Communication Research Committee, made up of faculty and students, which functions like a department and helps publish the institute's research publication, *Philippine Journal of Communications*

*Studies*, begun in 1971. At least nine courses at UPIMC deal with communication research, and both undergraduates and graduate students must submit research theses. Topics of study in the research, of which more will be said later, include rural and urban development and mass communication, family planning campaigns and institutional development of mass media.<sup>53)</sup>

About the same time that UPIMC was being conceptualized, a number of former practicing journalists were establishing the Philippine Press Institute (1964) and three years later, the Press Foundation of Asia, both of which were located in Manila, and both of which were interested primarily in the professionalization of journalism, aspects of which included training and research. Through a series of seminars and a publication program, the Press Foundation of Asia, especially, was instrumental in compiling the first annual surveys of mass media in Asia, at first called *The Asian Press* and today, *Asian Press and Media Directory*.

To a lesser degree, and sometimes for more commercial reasons, other regional and extra-regional groups conducted mass communication research in Southeast Asia. But the boon to the development of mass communication as a field of study, not only in Southeast Asia but all of Asia, was the Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Centre (AMIC), founded in Singapore in 1971 with support from the

51) Donald Hull, "A Content Analysis of the Development of Television for South Vietnam," Ph. D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1970.

52) See, for example, "100 Years of Vietnam Press," in *Bach Khoa*, January 15, 1966.

53) Hernando Abaya, "The Philippine Mass Media: Challenge and Performance," AMIC document, 1971.

Singapore government and funding from Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung of West Germany. AMIC has a number of objectives and projects, acting as a documentation center for the collection and exchange of mass communication materials on Asia; providing a publication program which includes bibliographies,<sup>54)</sup> occasional papers,<sup>55)</sup> monographs,<sup>56)</sup> conference papers and reports,<sup>57)</sup> and periodicals including the quarterly *Media Asia*;<sup>58)</sup> providing consultancy services, organizing refresher courses for mass communication practitioners, researchers and trainers, and con-

vening conferences and seminars.

The role of research has been featured at nearly all AMIC seminars and conferences. In a series of seminars on teaching and training of communication in Asia, held at various times in 1972,<sup>59)</sup> the study of traditional media, joint research efforts between academic and non-academic sectors, research emphasis in government, schools and departments, re-examination of the applicability of Western research methods to Asia, and indigenous books and communication materials were among priority needs discussed by the Southeast Asian participants.<sup>60)</sup> It was pointed out that in countries such as Malaysia and Singapore, except for commercial research groups which serve agencies on a subscription basis,<sup>61)</sup> there was no formal mass communication research. On the status of research of traditional media (a theme reiterated often at future conferences), Patron, for example, asked: "What, for instance, are the influences of these (traditional media) on new communication structures; how do the modern media fit into traditional modes of communication; have the form and content of media taken account of them; are modern media changing tradition and altering communications forms and types?"<sup>62)</sup> An Indonesian researcher felt mass communication

54) Already in print: *Mass Communication in Malaysia: An Annotated Bibliography*, 1975; *Communication and Change in Rural Asia—A Select Bibliography*, 1973; *Mass Communication in India: An Annotated Bibliography*, 1976; *Mass Communication in Hong Kong and Macao: An Annotated Bibliography*, 1976; *Mass Communication in the Philippines: An Annotated Bibliography*, 1976; *Broadcasting in Asia: An Annotated Bibliography*, 1974.

55) Already in print: Wilbur Schramm, *Television Reconsidered*, 1972; Everett Kleinjans, *Crossroads in Communication*, 1972; *Communication and Change in Rural Asia*, 1975; George Verghese, *Project Chhatra—An Experiment in Development Journalism*, 1976; Asok Mitra, *Information Imbalance in Asia*, 1975; Philip Coombs, et al., *Integrated Rural Development and Communication*, 1977; Reinhard Keune and P. R. R. Sinha, *Broadcast Teaching and Training*, 1977.

56) Already in print: Hitchcock, *op. cit.*; Shelton Gunaratne, *Modernisation and Knowledge: A Study of Four Ceylonese Villages*, 1976; Reinhard Keune and Guy de Fontgalland, *Television News Exchange in Asia*, 1976.

57) Already in print: P. R. R. Sinha, "Communication and Rural Change," 1973; Guy de Fontgalland, "Study Seminar on Development Communication," 1976.

58) Others are: *Asian Mass Communication Bulletin*, quarterly newsletter; *List of Theses 1971 through 1974: Studies on Mass Communication in Asia*, annual; and *AMIC Index of Periodicals*, semi-annual since 1972.

59) Held in Bali, Kuala Lumpur, Colombo and Seoul.

60) See reports by F. S. Lian, "Singapore Report," AMIC conference, Kuala Lumpur, May 29-June 1, 1972; Aladdin, "Preparation of Textbooks and Manuals," AMIC document; Wong Soon Chong, "The Teaching and Training of Communication in Singapore," AMIC conference, Bali, May 1-6, 1972.

studies lagged far behind disciplines such as political science and economics in implementing joint regional efforts in research; he called for the abandonment of “unfruitful pet projects and duplication of works” of scholars, and the establishment of national and regional research priorities.<sup>63)</sup> (By 1975, AMIC, recognizing this need for joint research, conducted two workshops on the topic. The first Cooperative Research Workshop, held in Manila in August 1974, was attended by participants from ten institutions who drew up outlines for cross-national projects on media habits and information needs of the people.<sup>64)</sup> The second such workshop,

also held in Manila in December 1975, worked on the cooperative project, “perception and pretesting.”<sup>65)</sup>)

At all these conferences, sponsored by AMIC, the need to develop and upgrade the research emphasis in governmental, academic and private sectors was proposed. Delineating what already existed, the participants thought most academic programs were media production oriented, although they saw some trends to research emphasis; they also said the advertising and market research conducted in the region was necessarily commercially-based, expensive and inaccessible. For example, of 14 schools or departments of journalism in the Philippines, only UPIMC listed research as a top priority, although Ateneo de Manila and University of Philippines at Los Baños also carried out research projects.<sup>66)</sup> In Vietnam, communication education and research were almost nonexistent; the only university teaching

61) Market research is growing at a rapid pace. In 1974, US \$25 million was spent on market research in Asia, one-fourth of it shared by ASEAN nations, Hong Kong and the rest of Asia, omitting Japan and Australia which took up one-fourth and one-half, respectively. The Survey Research Group has a major share of the markets in Malaysia and Singapore and is associated with Thailand's Deemar, Philippines' Consumer Pulse and Indonesia's Insearch. Problems that market researchers face are, of course, similar to those discussed in this paper—sampling is difficult and costly; language barriers; availability of researchers, etc. The large market research groups functioning in Southeast Asia are Survey Research Group, Spectrum and Research Bureau Ltd. (all three in Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia), International Research Associates (in Thailand and Philippines), and ASI/FERO (in Singapore and Malaysia). Newell Grenfell, “Market Research Comes of Age,” *Media for Asia's Communications Industry*, April 1974, pp. 7–11.

62) Josefina Patron, at AMIC conference, Kuala Lumpur, May 29–June 1, 1972.

63) M. Alwi Dahlan, “Joint Regional Efforts in Communication Research,” AMIC conference, Bali, May 1–6, 1972.

64) Y. V. Lakshmana Rao and Lena U Wen Lim, “Research and Practice in Mass Communication in Asia: Doing and Understanding,” *Studies of Broadcasting* (Tokyo: NHK, 1976), p. 120.

65) “AMIC Workshop in Manila,” *AMCB*, September 1975, p. 9.

66) The Philippines in 1972, however, fared far better than other Southeast Asian nations in communication research emphasis and production. UPIMC at that time was involved in family planning communication under UNESCO, UNFPA and UNICEF sponsorship; Ateneo de Manila University dealt with studies exploring historical and critical perspectives of mass communication. In addition, groups such as the University of the Philippines Community Development Research Council and the National Media Production Center conducted research into development communication, and the Philippine Mass Communication Research Society, made up of 67 advertisers and advertising and media agencies, did content analysis, qualitative-quantitative measurement and cost efficiency studies. Ophelia Lopez, “The Organizational Structure of Philippine Mass Media,” AMIC meeting, August 1972.

journalism did not include research in the curriculum.<sup>67)</sup> Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, in 1972, had plans to develop the discipline, but were still heavily dependent on what could be obtained from the commercial research firms. At least Malaysia and Indonesia were in the process of setting up research units attached to their governmental information services.

As for the applicability of Western research techniques to the Asian scene, perhaps Patron best summarized the feelings of the participants: "It seems that within the Asian context, communication theories which have come to use out of Western approaches with heavy sociological-psychological orientations would not suffice; that additional frames of reference taken from artistic, literary, dramatic traditions and aesthetic practices might probably provide most significant insights into the ways a Filipino (or an Asian) perceive and receive (sic) mass media messages."<sup>68)</sup> Unanimity seemed to prevail concerning the need for indigenous textbooks, manuals and other teaching and research materials. An Indonesian said in his country, the first books in communications were in Dutch or German, thus the initial orientation towards the German

publizistik approach. After 1960, he continued, the shift was to the use of United States texts and that nation's approach to the field. Because professors were overburdened with teaching, or with taking sideline jobs to subsist, he said they had neither the time or resources to write indigenous materials. However, by the early 1970s, the Indonesian Department of Education, Consortium of Social Sciences, provided fellowships to scholars to research and write or translate textbooks.<sup>69)</sup> A Filipino scholar reported that at UPIMC, students, required to write term papers and theses on local communication problems, provided the instructional materials.<sup>70)</sup>

### **Institutions for Communication Research:**

In 1973, when AMIC took an inventory of institutions in Asia involved in teaching, training or research, there was a total of 136 in 16 nations, most of which (89 per cent) were privately owned, usually universities. Of this total, 107 performed at least minimal research functions. In Southeast Asia, there were 51 institutions involved in teaching, training or research in mass communication; 45.1 (or 23) of which were in the Philippines. Twenty-two Southeast Asian institutions carried out research, mostly in conjunction with teaching (9) or training (6); only five were

67) Lê Thai Bãng, "Education on Mass Communication in Vietnam," AMIC document.

68) Patron, *op. cit.* Rao and Lim, however, cast doubt about the sincerity of some researchers' concern about applicability of Western approaches. They wrote that, among Asian researchers, there is "a disproportionate reliance on what 'others' have written. When this continues to exist side by side with their own frequently expressed feelings about the 'irrelevance' of non-Asian reading material, one cannot but wonder." Rao and Lim, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

69) The fee paid was US\$1.25 per page plus royalty after publication. Aladdin, *op. cit.*

70) Cesar Mercado, "The Problems and Prospects of Upgrading Teaching and Training Mass Communication in the Philippines," AMIC conference, Bali, May 1-6, 1972.

**Table 1** Southeast Asian Nations' Involvement in Mass Communication, Teaching, Training and Research

Country	Teaching	Training	Research	Teach/Train	Teach/Res.	Train/Res.	All 3	Others
Indonesia	2	1	2	2	2	1	—	1
Malaysia	—	2	1	—	2	1	—	—
Philippines	2	4	2	1	3	3	1	7
Singapore	1	1	—	—	1	—	—	—
Thailand	2	1	—	—	1	—	1	1
Vietnam	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
Totals	8	9	5	3	9	6	2	9
Percentages	15.9	17.6	9.8	5.9	17.6	10.2	3.9	17.6

wholly research oriented and two combined all three functions. Again, the Philippines had the largest number of institutions which worked in research, nine; followed by Indonesia, five; Malaysia, four; Thailand, two; and Singapore and Vietnam, one each (see Table 1). The Philippines also led in the number of senior professionals working in teaching, training or research in mass communication with 174 of the 366 total, followed by Indonesia, 69; Malaysia, 45; Thailand, 38; Singapore, 28; and Vietnam, 12.<sup>71)</sup>

The following breakdown, compiled from the AMIC directory, provides insights into the research situation in each Southeast Asian nation:

**Indonesia**—Akademi Penerangan, Gadjah Mada University and Perguruan Tinggi Publisistik Jakarta seemed to be the most productive institutions in research, although in at least one of these institutions, research meant translation of foreign books. The types of Indonesian studies completed or

ongoing involved the role of radio in mass education, newspaper role in social change, freedom of press, education for communication/journalism in Indonesia, source of information, readership surveys in seven campuses, judicial cases of journalists, public opinion concerning a five-year development plan, effect of opinion on a daily on the evolution of sports in Indonesia, role of public relations in the Indonesian State Administration, functions of slogans and trade mark in advertising, mass communication and Islamic propaganda, role of a film documentary, relation of press and authority under Act #11/1966, Televisi Republik Indonesia and effects on other media functions, television effects on children, tourism communication in Jakarta, media survey on Timor, development communication strategy for Indonesia's Second Development Programme and reading materials in Javanese villages.

**Malaysia**—Universiti Sains Malaysia and Mara Institute of Technology probably carry out the bulk of the research conducted in Malaysia. Among the topics studied were: public relations growth, needs,

71) Author's analysis of *Asian Mass Communication Institutions—A Directory*, Singapore: AMIC, 1973.

terminology and role in national development; coverage of the May 13 riots in the United States press; historical studies on Malay journalism; content analyses of various media; newspaper coverage of the 1969 elections and surveys of various media.

**Philippines**—The largest number of research projects completed or ongoing in the Philippines was conducted by the University of Philippines Institute of Mass Communication, followed by Maryknoll College, University of Philippines College of Agriculture, Silliman University and the National Media Production Center. The topics are too many to list here but a few examples will provide the great scope: television in rural areas; instructional television in the Philippines; analysis of school children to effectiveness of broadcasting; effects of controlled media in Philippine tourism; management-employee communication in Philippine banking institutions; television commercials' appeal to housewives; effect of Tagalog on advertising; critiques of local film industry; role of a newspaper to the New Society; role of television in a calamity; pretesting, formation and acceptance of family planning messages; feasibility studies of broadcasting; listening/viewing studies; professional training and development in film; survey of educational media programming of educational institutions; images and mass media; profiles and directories of community newspapers and student publications; use of comics and soap operas in family planning campaigns; survey of rural development programs of radio stations; development communication

in an agricultural context; surveys of readers; effectiveness of alternate communication strategies, various media, extension publications; mass media as agents of change in barrios; readability formula for the Philippines; communication strategies of the Green Revolution; communication research in developing nations; reporting of the Philippines in the United States press; press and youth activism; knowledge, attitude and practice surveys; content analyses of radio editorials pre- and post-martial law, women news reporting, crime reporting; readability of major dailies; mass media and national development and growth of Philippine press under the American regime.

**Singapore**—The only three institutions which listed research projects were CEPTA-TV, Nanyang University and the University of Singapore. The very few topics included a general survey of Singaporean media; a national survey of husband-wife communication and family planning; mass media language and modernity in major Southeast Asian cities and surveys on programming priorities and socio-economic and cultural backgrounds of countries participating in CEPTA-TV projects.

**Thailand**—Thammasat University, UNDP/UNICEF Development Support Communication Service, and Chulalongkorn University seemed to carry the research burden. Among the studies were: evaluation of mass media and audiences in relation to family planning; feedback techniques in ETV Service; villagers' media needs; mass communication resources in Thailand; content analysis of



front page news of Bangkok dailies; efficiency of publications on community development; provision of information across language and cultural barriers, and communication support programs for an experimental farm.

**Vietnam**—Van Hanh University in 1973 was listed as conducting the sole research project, a survey of the Vietnamese press.

### Types of Research Studies:

Feliciano, writing in 1974, generalized that mass communication research in Southeast Asia is “embryonic in development, journalism-oriented, school-based, Western-influenced, and multi-directional.”<sup>72)</sup> There is no basis for arguing against this statement, except that part which claims that the research is press/journalism based. This author’s analysis showed that of 268 studies reported as completed in six Southeast Asian nations between 1965–1973, 51 (or approximately 19 per cent) dealt with press/journalism, 42 (or approximately 15 per cent) with television, 37 (or approximately 14 per cent) with family planning, 32 with communication and development, and 25 with radio (see Table 2). In the Philippines, there were 186 completed and 42 ongoing projects between 1965–1973; in Malaysia, 25 completed, 15 ongoing; Indonesia, 23 completed, six ongoing; Singapore, 13 completed, five ongoing; Thailand, 20 completed; and Vietnam, one completed.

More specifically, according to Feliciano, the research from the early 1960s through 1973 focused on media infrastructure studies (history and development of media), studies of communicators and receivers of messages and development-type studies. Critiquing these three types, Feliciano said the infrastructure studies left much to be desired in relation to the coverage of historical events tied to media growth, the accuracy of media statistics presented, and the objectivity of the reporting. She said a number of these studies were purely descriptive (a mere recital of events in chronological order); dealt mainly with specialized areas of journalism/communication (such as economic reporting or the broadcast industry), and traced media development by use of a mix of mechanical, social and organizational points of view. The studies on communicators were mostly at the village level; dealt with agricultural communication related to the spread of new farming practices; were descriptive, using sample survey approaches of formal and informal interviews; and ignored urban communicators. Audience analyses, Feliciano contended, have received the most attention of researchers in Southeast Asia; they have dealt with target audiences as groups (their socio-economic conditions, reactions to messages, attitudes, values, orientations, motivations, preferences and effects); have used the sample survey; and have been limited by area coverage, small samples and non-rigorous research methods. Finally, development-type studies, carried out mainly in universities, have used content analysis, readability formula, recall and comprehension tests,

72) Gloria D. Feliciano, “The Status of Mass Communication Research in Southeast Asia,” paper later published in *Philippine Journal of Communications Studies*, September 1974, pp. 64–76.

**Table 2** Categories of Research Studies Completed and Ongoing in Southeast Asia, 1965-1973

Country	Press/Jour.	TV	Radio	Advtg.	AV/Film	PR	Mass Com.	Mass Media	Com. & Dev.	Res. Mtds.	Agri. Com.	Fam. Pl.	General
Indonesia	13(1)	1(1)	(1)	1	1	1		1(1)	1				4(2)
Malaysia	15(1)	3(2)	2(2)		1(2)	(3)	1	(1)	1(1)				2(3)
Philippines	20(4)	35(9)	23(4)	3	12(3)	1	1	3	18(1)	3(1)	15(6)	34(11)	18(3)
Singapore	(1)	2					2	(1)	4	2		1	2(3)
Thailand	2	1			1		2		8		3	2	1
Vietnam	1												
Completed	51	42	25	4	15	2	6	4	32	5	18	37	27
Ongoing	7	12	7	—	5	3	—	3	2	1	6	11	11

Figures in parentheses represent ongoing projects.

Source: P. R. R. "Review of the Directory of the Asian Mass Communication and Information Centre," 1973.

**Table 3** Categories of Bibliographic Items in Lent Bibliography

Country	Mass Com. Biblio.	Mass Com. General	Advtg./PR Govt. Info.	Film	Press Freedom	History of Press	Law of Press	News Agencies	Print Media	Radio & TV	Tot.
Burma	15			2					30	9	56
Indonesia	14	61	3	12					204	35	329
Khmer		5							9	5	19
Laos		6							6	4	16
Malaysia	1	121	59	82	67	93	20	28	209	160	840
Philippines	31	273	412	117	466	138	174	14	666	371	2,662
Singapore	3	29	3	3					67	32	137
Thailand	2	47	5	5					47	56	162
Vietnam		124							88	47	259

the panel, document analysis and informal interviews; have lacked attention in study designs to motivational and instructive aspects of the development message.<sup>73)</sup>

To determine the areas written about most frequently in Southeast Asian mass communication, this author counted the number of items relating to various categories in his own Asian mass communication bibliography<sup>74)</sup> and in mass communication bibliographies compiled by Lim and de Jesus<sup>75)</sup> in Malaysia and Philippines, respectively. It must be emphasized that not all works in these three bibliographies can be classified as research; many are newspaper articles and other ephemeral items. But, one may be able to obtain an impression of where the emphases lay in writing about mass communication. The Philippines led in number of bibliographic items in the Lent bibliography with 2,662, followed by Malaysia with 847 and Indonesia, 329. In all countries, except Thailand, there were more items concerning print media than any other category, confirming what Feliciano found in the number of research reports (see Table 3).

In the Lim bibliography on mass communication in Malaysia, 450 items were listed, but probably not more than a dozen

or so were scientific studies. In these writings, communication in development was featured most often, 86; followed by newspapers, 66; bibliography and reference material, 54; communication teaching and training, 36; and broadcast media, 30. Traditional media and communication technology, both of which have been talked about extensively recently in Malaysia, were written about least, two times each. Of the 1,221 published and unpublished items in the de Jesus bibliography on the Philippines, 348 dealt with aspects of communication in development, 101 on mass media in formal education, 89 on newspapers, 78 on print media, and 58 on communication teaching and training. However, only five items discussed communication technology; 18, film; 22, traditional media; and 26, media characteristics.

Finally, to determine the topics and methodologies being used by students at the UPIMC, this author made an analysis of 1975 BA theses listed in the three most recent acquisitions lists of UPIMC Library. Mass media exposure, combined with attitude studies, predominated with eight theses, followed by case study of how media carry out their objectives, three; interaction, evaluative, two each; and historical, use of instructional media and persuasion studies, one each. Survey methods were most favored by thesis writers; where methodology could be determined, four used interview schedules, three unstructured interviews, and one each observation, questionnaire, participant observation, attitude scale and questionnaire and questionnaire and interview.<sup>76)</sup>

73) Gloria D. Feliciano, "An Overview of Communication Research in Asia: Status, Problems and Needs," Honolulu: Papers of East-West Communication Institute, No. 6, June 1973, pp. 4, 6; also see her article in *Media Asia* 1 (1974), especially page 3.

74) Lent, *Asian Mass Communications...*, *op. cit.*

75) Lim Huck Tee, *Mass Communication in Malaysia: An Annotated Bibliography*, Singapore: AMIC, 1975; Emilinda de Jesus, *Mass Communication in the Philippines: An Annotated Bibliography*, Singapore: AMIC, 1976.

Some titles included: "Mass media exposure and attitude of seminarians to sex," "Media exposure and knowledge and buying habits of female office workers towards shampoo," communication factors related to the attitudes of Filipino males toward sauna bath establishments, and courtship and marriage rites communication patterns among Hanuno-o-Mangyans.

From these analyses, it can be concluded that mass communication research in Southeast Asia is, as had been claimed, multi-directional. Also, complaints at AMIC conferences of duplicity of research efforts between institutions and nations seem to be well-founded, and the surge towards use of development communication strategies by Southeast Asian nations seems to have affected the direction of the research, especially in the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia. Development communication research has been in four main areas: development communication as change agents; message strategies for development programs; use of mass media in development programs, and audiences of development programs. According to Feliciano, there is meagre knowledge on "which media, and which of their characteristics, have been effective in 'reaching' particular audiences; on the other hand, there has been an overemphasis on audience studies."<sup>76</sup> Another researcher said development

communication-type research in the region was limited in scope, gave insufficient attention to the form and content of the development information that appears, and where content analysis was used, little effort was made to identify or explain the important relationships between content and editorial policy, governmental policy and audience reactions.<sup>78</sup>

### Problems of Conducting Research:

In a paper published in 1974, Feliciano, who has written a number of works on problems of mass communication research in Southeast Asia, said the field suffered from slow growth; lack of appreciation of the subject field by the government, media and private sectors; inadequate goal-oriented direction; bias for certain study types, and poor methodology. She felt that a fault of research training in the area was that senior professional staff were sent abroad, but very little was done to help the support staff, the field workers. She stated the need for trained professional researchers was especially keen in Southeast Asia where cultures vary from province to province, language can be a serious drawback, supervision is difficult, physical facilities are scarce, research methods are largely untested, and where there are sensitivities to doing research. Feliciano said it was costly to conduct research in the region because of the logistical support and the required longer time it takes to finish a

76) UPIMC, "New Acquisitions," Nos. 22-24, October 1976, December 1976, March 1977.

77) Gloria D. Feliciano, "Communication and Development in Southeast Asia, 1964-1974," in Wilbur Schramm and Daniel Lerner, *Communication and Change: The Last Ten Years—and the Next*, Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1976, p. 198.

78) Bryant Kearn, "Findings and Needs of Communication Research: An Outsider's View," in P. R. R. Sinha, *Communication and Rural Change*, Singapore: AMIC, 1976, p. 88.

project.<sup>79)</sup> However, the latter point notwithstanding, Rao and Lim have written that support for research is available in most parts of Asia from both government and private groups, and that the researchers have failed to tap the resources available to them. "There seems to be a great need in Asia to train potential researchers in the basic skills of entrepreneurship. Go out and seek, identify needs and convince the powers that be."<sup>80)</sup>

Because of the lack of goal-oriented direction, Feliciano felt that institutes take up favorite projects which in turn lead to "meaningless, irrelevant, duplicative" research. Also, some areas are overemphasized, as has been suggested earlier, while others go unnoticed. She illustrated by showing that the receiver or audience aspect—traits, preferences, reactions to, attitudes towards and use of media—has been over-researched, while effects of mass media on behavior and attitudes have received very little attention.<sup>81)</sup> Some critics claim the concern with audiences may have distracted scientific attention from other important questions such as who controls mass media and how decisions, policy and programming are made in these media institutions.<sup>82)</sup>

A problem of Southeast Asian research touched upon by Feliciano, Rao and Lim, and Lent is the lack of sharing of information. Feliciano said the research was particularly masked "if the research findings

have not been published since this may cause apprehensions about the possibility of 'pirating' of the material, of premature or inaccurate citation, of giving impressions of 'showing off,' or of getting critical comments about the quality of the study from the receiver."<sup>83)</sup> Rao and Lim said the exchange of research information suffers because Asians generally are not used to asking for information—possibly because of cultural traits which equate asking for information to showing ignorance and thus losing face—, and are not used to paying for information. In cases where researchers can afford to purchase information, they are prevented from doing so because of complicated currency controls. Rao and Lim said AMIC's experience as a documentation center had been disheartening, that not until 1974, did the number of requests for information from Asian nations exceed those from outside Asia. "Our (Asian) attitude to information exchange seems to be a selfish, one-sided affair in which we extract what we can from the system without considering the necessity of putting back into the system what information we can contribute," they said.<sup>84)</sup>

79) Feliciano, "The Status of Mass Communication Research...", *op. cit.*

80) Rao and Lim, *op. cit.*

81) Feliciano, "The Status of Mass Communication...", *op. cit.*

82) It has been suggested that the high price of research may have exerted strong pressure on the nature of the research. Funds for research do not come from urban poor or rural villages, the main targets of development efforts. Therefore, the sponsorship of communication research tends to influence it to study a range of problems reflecting the priorities of government rather than the public, of elites rather than the masses, of communication sources rather than communication receivers, of establishment rather than revolutionary attempts to alter the social situation.

83) Feliciano, "The Status of Mass Communication...", *op. cit.*

84) Rao and Lim, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-124.

Lent found similar exchange problems in Malaysia where petty jealousies between institutions and individuals, the hesitation to publish results and the bureaucratic redtape, among other things, prevented the sharing of research findings. Also, often the few researchers in a country are in such demand on the consultancy or conference circuits that they leave their writing desks, get caught up in success traps and become less productive.<sup>85)</sup>

Exchange of information between Southeast Asian scholars also suffers from poorly written reports, attributable to the variety of languages in use, the lack of professional translations and stylistic differences. As Feliciano wrote in still another paper, "available research reports meant for the practitioners or for the action men are usually not written in a form they can readily use."<sup>86)</sup> This point has been discussed by Rao in a number of places. He and Lim reiterated, for example, the point that research findings are not reaching decision makers in a style they can understand and use. "Research which is voluminous and jargon-bound must be synthesized, simplified and abridged if it is to be truly useful in a practical sense," they wrote.<sup>87)</sup> Lent has written:

The research itself must be meaningful and intelligible, designed to inform, not impress, to find results, not just test methodologies. It should attempt to

avoid the self-perpetuating research oftentimes 'completed' in the United States, whereby the researcher fills two-thirds of his report with his methodology, a tiny fraction on findings and analysis and another large section on rationalizations why the study did not yield results. A developing country probably cannot afford such luxuries.<sup>88)</sup>

Also, some reports are not disseminated because of a lack of funds for publication, an inefficient mail system and the already implied tendency of Southeast Asian scholars to work in isolation. Kearn, discussing publication, made the interesting observation that the Asian scholar who wishes to be read by a large number of informed contemporaries, including those in Asia, has no choice but to write for a Western journal. The process, he said, is circular: a research journal published in Asia has a limited choice of authors and articles and there is a consequent unevenness of content quality. Potential subscribers, therefore, give it a low priority when deciding to spend scarce funds on research publications. This limits the inter-country distribution of scientific and technical journals within Asia, which in turn, limits the usefulness of these journals as outlets for research reports. Use of non-Asian outlets affects the content of the reports and the choices in planning a research program. Kearn concluded, "If one seeks to do the kind of research most easily publishable in a Western journal, he may not be doing the kind most useful in

85) John A. Lent, "Missing Links in Mass Communications Research in Malaysia," *Media Asia*, 2 : 4 (1975).

86) Feliciano, "An Overview of Communication Research in Asia...", *op. cit.*, p. 11.

87) Rao and Lim, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

88) Lent, "Missing Links...", *op. cit.*

promoting programmes of development in Asia.”<sup>89)</sup>

Concerning the methodologies employed in mass communication research in Southeast Asia, Feliciano and Lozare and Grenfell, among others, have shown that survey research is the most popular despite its built-in disadvantages to a developing society. Feliciano and Lozare, lamenting the overuse of survey research in Southeast Asia, said for this type of research, the resources are not readily available. For example, interviewers are hard to come by because they have limited tenure, low salary and virtually no fringe benefits and do not possess expertise in human relations necessary for interviewing and observation. Grenfell, who wrote that the lack of trained personnel is the biggest problem of survey research in Southeast Asia, said that the availability of interviewers varies: in Thailand and Indonesia, students are available and reliable for this task; in other nations, they are not. He reported that Southeast Asian housewives do not favor interviewing and so this potential is lost.<sup>90)</sup>

Feliciano and Lozare said estimating time and cost of surveys according to Western standards is frustrating in Asia where time must be allowed for refreshments, meals, gifts, etc.<sup>91)</sup>

A number of writers have mentioned difficulties of sampling in the region. Feliciano has said the samples are often too

limited and non-representative, not to mention costly.<sup>92)</sup> Grenfell agreed that sampling is difficult and costly, mainly because of the short supply of useful and relevant statistics in the heterogeneous societies of Asia. Concerning language barriers, Grenfell reported, “It is an immense job to ensure that the same questions are being asked in every language.”<sup>93)</sup>

Other cultural impediments to using survey research methodology have been reported. Glattbach wrote that in some places in Southeast Asia, merely to ask a direct question is to imply disrespect, and the use of key color cards, for example, in interviews can produce misleading results because of cultural superstitions (e.g., red is lucky to Chinese; yellow is regal to Malays).<sup>94)</sup> Feliciano and Lozare illustrated the strange reactions encountered by researchers when they volunteered information on the nature of their studies to Asian peasant-subjects: “Telling rural respondents that the survey aims ultimately to hasten progress in the village through increased farm productivity unleashes their expectations of material donations from the interviewers in the form of fertilizers, insecticides, irrigation facilities and the like which tend to bias their responses.”<sup>95)</sup> They also pointed out that to assure respondents of confidentiality of data means to put away pen, pad or tape recorder used to insure

89) Kearl, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

90) Grenfell, *op. cit.*

91) Gloria D. Feliciano and Benjamin V. Lozare, “Using Western Social Research Methodology in Rural Asia: Problems and Prospects,” in P. R. R. Sinha, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

92) Feliciano, “An Overview of Communication Research in Asia...,” *op. cit.*, p. 9.

93) Grenfell, *op. cit.*

94) Jack Glattbach, “The Problem with ‘Damned Lies’ and Statistics,” *Media For Asia’s Communications Industry*, April 1974, p. 11.

95) Feliciano and Lozare, “Using Western Social Research Methods...,” *op. cit.*, p. 81.

reliable data collecting. Other difficulties in the use of survey research in Southeast Asia are caused by inappropriate questionnaire or interview language, weaknesses in the questionnaires themselves, the urban orientation of interviewers, inadequacies of respondents<sup>96)</sup> and the involvement of village leaders in the conducting of the survey.<sup>97)</sup>

In addition to the questionnaire and interview, the case study is a frequently used method of communication research in the region. Observational techniques, Feliciano and Lozare said, have more pronounced problems in Southeast Asia than in the West because a high premium is placed on "smooth interpersonal relations" by rural Asians, hastening the assimilation of the participant/observer into the local culture, at the same time making the collection, analysis and writing of the research much more subjective."<sup>98)</sup> Feliciano and Lozare also pointed out that experimental method is the least used tool in the area, mainly because of insufficient researchers to carry them out and the problems of securing homogenous groups for a field experiment.<sup>99)</sup>

Among other research problems of Southeast Asian scholars are the use of imprecise quantitative measures, of approaches limited to one discipline, and of

interpretations of data carried out by using one of two extremes—either complete reliance on statistical significance, overlooking the sociocultural milieu, or overdependence on descriptive data which are subjective.<sup>100)</sup> One problem that has been omitted by most writers on mass communication research is that of political restrictions in the field. As a few of these governments are working under martial law administrations and other quasi-authoritarian arrangements, the topics allowed, accessibility to data and general government support can be (and often are) controlled.

There have been other criticisms of Western methodologies employed in Third World settings. Rogers, who has conducted many diffusion of innovation studies in the Third World and whose models have been used almost religiously in Southeast Asia, has conceded that diffusion research, including his own, has not dealt enough with change-over-time aspects of the communication process. He said this results from a lack of concepts and propositions that reflect a process orientation, the expense of such studies, the fact that repeated data gathering over time leads to problems of respondent sensitization and the pressures researchers face to produce immediate results.<sup>101)</sup> Rogers, as well as Rahim and Lozare, has chastized the overwhelming focus on the individual, and not the social system to which he belongs, as a unit of analysis.<sup>102)</sup> Rahim has regretted that diffusion research has been primarily on the diffusion of technological

96) For example, the generally low educational levels, as well as narrow span of experience of village people limit the use of sophisticated tools such as projective questions aimed at eliciting empathy levels, etc.

97) Feliciano and Lozare, "Using Western Social Research Methods...", *op. cit.*, pp. 81-82.

98) *Ibid.*, p. 83.

99) *Ibid.*

100) Feliciano, "An Overview of Communication Research in Asia...", *op. cit.*, p. 10.



innovations (seeds, fertilizers, etc.), not on diffusion of new ideas, new ideologies, new social relations, social institutions or social values; has assumed a one-way dependency relationship which implies that the source of the innovation (industrialized West) is superior to the receiver of innovation (undeveloped East); and has omitted studying the crucial role of interpersonal communication in diffusion.<sup>103)</sup> Still other criticisms of diffusion studies are that they are biased, being pro-innovation; that they ignore content of media, and that they are Western-based. Causal models of communication, relating literacy to media growth and urbanization, have been held up to scrutiny lately, some researchers believing fast urbanization does not necessarily mean more use of media, but instead the transferal of a rural, illiterate lifestyle to the city. Two-step flow models have been found to explain very few communication situations in Asia, to be too simplified for much use,

and to be elitist biased. Some writers feel the trickle down argument of two-step flow is simply an excuse for inaccessibility to mass media messages by the majority of the population in a developing nation.<sup>104)</sup>

### Teaching Communication Research:

Most of the problems associated with teaching communication research in Southeast Asia have already been discussed under other sections of this paper, for many of the problems of doing research also apply to teaching research. Feliciano, for example, listed the following problems: 1. low image of journalism education within academia,<sup>105)</sup> 2. ambivalent attitudes of students towards research, 3. lack of local, more relevant teaching materials, 4. insufficient trained staff to conduct and teach research,<sup>106)</sup> 5. meagre resources of facilities and services for doing research, and 6. lack of administrative support.<sup>107)</sup> Because of the low prestige accorded journalism education, at least in the Philippines, Feliciano said the poorer

101) Everett Rogers, "Where Are We in Understanding the Diffusion of Innovations?" in Schramm and Lerner, *op. cit.*, p. 210. Discussing Rogers' alteration of his diffusion paradigm in 1975, one Indian researcher said that Indian theses of agricultural universities are still based on the model he no longer stands by. He said, "This confession must have done him good, but the damage of his original sin was already done . . . . The disturbing fact, nonetheless, is these, viz. that out of some 1,700 studies hardly anyone questioned in the context of India the wisdom distilled from Midwest American farm practices." K. E. Eapen, "Specific Problems of Research and Research Training in Asian/African Countries," in *Communication Research in the Third World: The Need For Training*, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

102) Rogers, *op. cit.*, p. 212; Syed A. Rahim, "Diffusion Research—Past, Present and Future," in Schramm and Lerner, *op. cit.*, p. 225; Lozare, Ph. D. proposal, *op. cit.*

103) Rahim, *op. cit.*, pp. 223–225.

104) For criticism of Western theories and techniques, see, Lent, "Imperialism Via Q-Sorts," *op. cit.*

105) She cites Philippine studies which showed that students felt journalism education had low prestige. See, "J Ranks 10th Among 15 Professions," *Press Forum*, January 1969, pp. 3–4; Maria Elena Abesamis, "Attitudes of High School Seniors Towards Journalism As a Career," BA thesis, UPIMC, April 1968; Florida A. Crucillo, "Attitudes Toward Journalism of Education, Music and Engineering Students of the University of the Philippines," BA thesis, UPIMC, 1969.

106) She said the media industries pay better and obtain the better researchers.

107) Gloria D. Feliciano, "Problems, Standards and Criteria for the Teaching of Communication Research in Asia," *Philippine Journal of Communications Studies*, June 1972, p. 85.

students enter the field.

A conference sponsored by the Lutheran World Federation on "communication research in the Third World: the need for training," held in Hong Kong in 1976, summed up the problems of teaching mass communication research this way: "We lack good teachers, good students and good books."<sup>108)</sup>

As for training mass communication researchers abroad, Lent has voiced complaints against the academic snobbery that he saw in at least one Southeast Asian university:

When this particular institution sought a Western communications researcher to act as a consultant for two years, its first choice was one of the top quantifiers in the United States, a man who had been dealing more with statistics than with people, societies and mass media. When students were sent abroad for advanced degrees, administrators at this university steered them to quantitative oriented schools, rather than to those that emphasise the role of mass media in society. And in case after case, emphasis was on prestige, the big name.<sup>109)</sup>

### Needs, Recommendations for Research:

In conclusion, although mass communication research has come a long way in Southeast Asia during the past decade, it, like research in most areas,<sup>110)</sup> is still riddled with numerous problems and needs. The

central issue of most discussion on needs of mass communication research in Southeast Asia revolves around the question: How can Western communication methodology be adapted to developing nations? Perhaps we have to go back to Pausewang again for part of the answer. From his African experiences, he suggested the need for an intermediate technology for developing nations, one that does not burn more "resources than necessary and not try to be more exact than absolutely necessary, but rather as rough as permissible, but at the same time as comprehensive as possible."<sup>111)</sup> A number of Asians have implied the same, some emphasizing that one priority need is to research the methodologies being used in Asia.

Calling for a shift in the direction and nature of mass communication research in Southeast Asia, Feliciano saw a "need for studies that would make optimum use of scarce resources to obtain maximum benefits for the development effort."<sup>112)</sup> To do this, there is a need for cross-disciplinary studies which pool valuable resources.<sup>113)</sup>

Eapen and others asked that more research and evaluation be done of potential folk media roles in bringing about social

108) *Communication Research in the Third World: The Need for Training*, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

109) Lent, "Missing Links..." *op. cit.*

110) For problems of social science and communication research in the United States, for example, see, Julia Brown and Brian Gilmartin, "Sociology Today: Lacunae, Emphases, and Surfeits," in Lawrence Rosen and Robert West, eds., *A Reader for Research Methods*, New York: Random House, 1973, pp. 11-23; Dennis Lowry, "Communication Research in the '70s: An Evaluation of Empirical Studies Reported in Seven Journals," unpublished manuscript.

111) Pausewang, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

112) Feliciano, "An Overview of Communication Research in Asia..." *op. cit.*, p. 11.

change;<sup>114)</sup> scholars at the Lutheran World Federation conference emphasized the need for a “departure from a long series of communication and national development studies which were carried out with paramount academic qualifications, but not necessarily with social relevance.” Among such desired studies these conferees listed were those “monitoring folk and modern media, not as isolated instruments of diffusion, but, as elements in the total process of social change.”<sup>115)</sup> The same

group reiterated what others have said, that Western style individualistic research for academic recognition will have to be abandoned in favor of research of benefit to national development.<sup>116)</sup> Kearsal suggested more research into typographic forms of non-Western languages—their legibility and readability;<sup>117)</sup> other priorities that have been mentioned at various times include studies of distribution of messages among population segments, of media content in relation to national development aims, of mass media ownership patterns, of extra-regional influences upon mass media, of domination of news flow from outside the region, of perception of symbols and of media effects upon rural audiences.

113) Already, some studies on Southeast Asian mass communication are using this approach. One is a six year study analyzing in-depth sociological, psychological, cultural, political and economic facts affecting urbanization and modernization in four suburban communities of Greater Manila. A second study is both cross-disciplinary and multi-national, comparing communication and related variables influencing husband-wife communication and family planning in Iran, India, Singapore and the Philippines.

114) Eapen, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

115) *Communication Research in the Third World: The Need for Training, op. cit.*, p. 9.

116) *Ibid.*, p. 10.

117) Kearsal, *op. cit.*, p. 93.